



Impact

News for OPSEU members at MPAC
from your leadership team
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Lip service:

MPAC fakes interest in consultation about Ombudsman's report, then cancels meeting; "superiority complex" is alive and well

As it turns out, MPAC *doesn't* want to consult with OPSEU about how to fix MPAC.

MPAC has abruptly cancelled the meeting, set for today, at which your union team was to offer its insights into the March 28 report on property assessment by Ontario Ombudsman André Marin.

The reason for the cancellation?

An e-mail from management said that "Dave Blakely and Brian Guerin have a Friday deadline for a report being prepared for the Board of Directors."

Gee, what report could that be?

Dave Blakely and Brian Guerin are the co-chairs of MPAC's "Ombudsman Response Team." Since MPAC plans to get its proposals for change to the Board by the end of May, it seems unlikely that Blakely and Guerin could be working on some report other than the report that contains MPAC's response to the Ombudsman's report.

Union input into MPAC's report has been **zero**.

On March 28, when the Ombudsman's report came out, MPAC president Carl Isenburg was keen to hear from us.

"We've had some preliminary discussions with our union representatives about how we'll work through the Ombudsman's report," he said. "And we've invited them to provide their input on the recommendations."

That remark was stretching the truth, to say the least. The only "discussion" at that point was a phone call to our team Vice-Chair Jamie Stata asking if the team would like to meet to discuss the report. Jamie said yes.

Two weeks later, on April 10, we met with Jack

Julien, Greg Volkes, and Human Resources VP Eric Preston (then on his way out the door). They asked if we would like to meet with Blakely and Guerin to talk about the Ombudsman's report. We said yes. May 19 was set for the meeting.

Then, on Tuesday, May 16, OPSEU Negotiator Rob Field e-mailed Jack Julien to confirm the meeting room. Julien replied saying the meeting was cancelled.

"We were skeptical all along about management's interest in what we had to say, and this just confirms what we feared," said Ivan Herrington, OPSEU chair of the Union-Management Committee at MPAC. "The superiority complex that permeates the upper echelons of MPAC management is alive and well and living in Pickering."

The union knows nothing of the content of the report except that it will present the Board with three options – Basic, Enhanced, and Ultimate – for changes to MPAC. Each option will have a different price tag.

Your union team is calling on MPAC management to share its report with us immediately. When the Ombudsman's report came out, Debbie Zimmerman, chair of the MPAC Board of Directors, said that, "Our Board believes transparency and openness are fundamental in building taxpayer trust and confidence in the property assessment system."

That openness has to start inside MPAC. Too many of us remember the last change plan, when OPSEU received 24 hours' notice before MPAC began implementing the Futures restructuring project. We **don't** want to see that again.

Still the same old MPAC

A severe spanking by the Ombudsman and a new collective agreement don't seem to have changed MPAC's management style. Across the province, MPAC managers still seem committed to doing things the old way. A few examples:

- **“The policy that isn't a policy” – the one that says MPAC won't hire back retired managers – is still not a policy.** MPAC is still hiring retired managers, and we hear rumblings that a few more may be on their way. Given that retirees are supposed to be, well, retired, we can't expect that they'll be sticking around for long. MPAC is missing a great chance to build the skills of existing staff and to hire new workers who will stick around for a long time.
- **During the last round of bargaining,** we negotiated extended recall rights for people demoted as a result of Futures. In two cases that we know of, MPAC is balking at hiring people from the recall list, saying that the current jobs, which are vacant but filled by acting staff, may be eliminated anyway. More alarming yet, managers in some locations are telling our members that they intend to find ways around the recall language. These shenanigans are certainly not in the spirit of what was agreed to in bargaining. MPAC could stand accused of bargaining in bad faith if our recall language is not respected.
- **In a spirit of co-operation,** we did something in the last round of bargaining that was good for MPAC and good for OPSEU members. We signed a Letter of Understanding that gave the employer the ability to post jobs that covered multiple offices. The

idea was to give the employer more options in hiring and give union members more options in finding new jobs. But in a case in Pembroke, the employer has narrowed the search down to, basically, one person. This definitely flies in the face of what we agreed to. It is not building a positive relationship with the union, and is not building a stronger property assessment system.

Keep in touch!

To ensure a speedy response to your questions, your leadership team has divided up all MPAC offices in the province. If you have a question or a comment, please contact the member responsible for your office. Contact us by e-mail at work or at home, as follows:

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